

San Francisco de Asís (Mission Dolores)



Sixth Mission

Founded: June 26, 1776 by Father Francisco Palóu

Named for: Saint Francis of Assisi

Location: 3321 16th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114

Better known as Mission Dolores, it is located in the San Francisco Bay that was discovered by accident when Gaspar de Portal's expedition was looking for Monterey Bay. It was immediately seen as an important naval base for the Spaniards to protect their colony from outside invaders.

Unfortunately, the often cold and damp weather kept the Native Americans away from this place, and it took almost a whole year before the first Native Americans were baptized there. The climate at the mission site was severe, often with chilly sea winds and damp fogs. This did not help the many natives stricken with the diseases brought by the foreigners. More than 5,000 Native Americans eventually died here from the measles epidemic. The problem of sick natives was so great that eventually, in 1817, a hospital mission was opened in San Rafael where the Mission Dolores inhabitants could recuperate in the sunshine. Later this became the Mission San Rafael Archangel.

In 1782 Father Palóu decided to move the mission to a more favorable site. In 1791 a beautiful new adobe church was dedicated. The Neophytes (Christianized Native Americans) built this church so well that it withstood the famous 1906 earthquake. Spared the earlier destruction of so many other California mission churches, it has been carefully preserved and today is the oldest intact building in San Francisco.

Soon after secularization, the mission began to decline. When the California Gold Rush hit the remote community around the mission became a bustling site. The mission area became a center for people to go to enjoy horse racing, gambling and drinking in taverns. Over time, the area was incorporated into a more respectable town area.

How was the San Francisco Bay discovered? _____

How did the climate affect the Mission? _____

What was the effect of the Gold Rush on this Mission? _____

What is the address of this Mission? _____

What caused the death of 5,000 Native Americans? _____
